
Editorial

Memorial Day 2014: 'Our Unfinished Work'

From its inception in May 1868, Memorial Day was not devoted so much to the recently ended Civil War, but to commemoration of the commitment to the Republic for which so many gave their lives. While remembering those who gave the ultimate sacrifice, the nation vowed to preserve its most sacred principles into the future, for the benefit of not only the widows and orphans, but of generations to come.

Lyndon LaRouche has recommended we do the same today, dedicating ourselves to creating a truly human future for all mankind.

Among those who lost their lives in that British-instigated war was America's greatest leader, President Abraham Lincoln. Although he did not die directly in battle, the assassin who brought him down was deployed on behalf of the Empire which had been attempting to destroy the American Republic ever since its victory in the War on Independence. In killing Lincoln, the Empire calculated that it was killing the one individual who, representing a spirit of reconciliation and compassion, could heal the nation, and make it strong.

Indeed, the British calculated well, for it took nearly three generations, 67 years, for the United States to elect another President with a comparable depth and nobility of character to bring the nation together, and lead the country onto a path of extraordinary progress. That, of course, was Franklin Roosevelt, whose leadership was crucial to saving us from fascism, at home and abroad.

But it is the poet Lincoln who best expressed for the ages, the appropriate spirit of Memorial Day, even before the war ended. Dedicating the battlefield at Gettysburg in 1863, he evoked the fundamental principles of the American Republic,

which have been worth dying for throughout its life—up until today. In celebrating our veterans, we would do best to grasp that spirit, and spread it among our fellow citizens, even as we seek to create the conditions in which men no longer slaughter each other in war.

“Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

“Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

“But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate—we can not consecrate—we can not hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”